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ER 0-5192

29 June 1949

File

The Honorable Brien McMahon
Chairman, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
Congress of the United States
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your letter of 24 June 1949 which you handed to me in the course of our meeting last Monday.

Your letter requests information in connection with certain remarks made by Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith before the Governors' Conference at Colorado Springs on 20 June 1949.

From newspaper accounts of General Smith's statement, I gather that he indicated in very general terms, in an off-the-record session, that the Russians soon may test a bomb. The Christian Science Monitor for 21 June stated that General Smith —

> "...emphasized his opinion that the Soviets do not have the know-how to make the delicate machinery needed for remote-control handling of atomic materials necessary for production of any large number of bombs. He noted in this connection that the Russians can't even make watches yet.
>
> "As a 'wild guess,' he added that it might take the Soviets 10 years or more to produce the powerful type of bombs this country has stockpiled..."

Consequently, there is no evidence to indicate that General Smith's statement was based on other than very general information, which, of course, has already been available to the Committee.

The information requested in the last paragraph of your letter of 24 June was contained in the report which I handed you on 27 June.

Sincerely,

Signed - Dispatched by hand

R. H. Hillenkoetter
Rear Admiral, USN
Director of Central Intelligence

State Dept. review completed

CRC, 10/06/2003

D: RHH/gc
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